1: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1938 AV7 Burusho AV7

262 care in rationing the year's supply (rationing begins the moment the first barley crop is harvested), scarcely a household we knew but was out of flour and out of potatoes weeks before the first barley was ripe, and was living solely on turnip tops, greens and edible weeds. ' Starvation Springtime ' in Hunza evokes no poet's raptures, only a wailing of hungry babies who, as their mothers apologetically explain ' are too small to understand ', and a tightening of the belt by those who do; but never a complaint. How these hardy people exist and work and smile—and keep on smiling—on a diet which no Minister of Health would consider even 50 per cent. adequate in quantity or 10 per cent. adequate in proteins, is a mystery, and must represent a miracle of
147 natural selection over centuries. There are no sick or ailing in
• 888 Hunza; men, women and children are wiry, tough and fit, and a fair
561 proportion live to a ripe and honoured age, busy to the last about such tasks as suit their waning strength and valued for their experienced counsel, for no devilish inventions—cinemas, wireless or machines—have created a gulf between the generations.

243 Harvesting processes are extremely simple. When barley or
476 wheat is ripe, the adults of the family turn out and pull up the shallow-rooted crop by hand, laying the swathes in neat rows to dry. Even when a sickle is used, it is used to pull with, not to cut. As soon as a suitable field is bare, it is flooded, and a circular (more rarely a rectangular) space is enclosed by a small mud wall four or five inches high. When the ground is soft but no longer wet, the whole family, down to the tiniest toddler, forms in line and marks time systematically over the surface to level it. After three floodings and tramplings the new threshing floor is as smooth and even as a hard tennis court. Two neighbouring houses sometimes share a threshing floor which becomes the focus of family activity till the last sheaf is gathered in. The cut crops are stacked conveniently near, and a small quantity of corn is spread on the centre of the floor. Then while Grandfather with his beautifully graceful five-pronged fork throws in more grain from time to time, the team of five cows, loosely lashed together by their muzzles, is driven round by man, woman, boy or girl in turns until the threshing
243 is complete (PLATE III). The person in attendance on the trampling
262 beasts has a switch in the right hand and in the left a wooden bowl as ' dung-dish ' in which all excreta of either type are conscientiously collected, not only because the Hunza folk cannot afford to waste an ounce of manure but equally because they are too fastidious to tolerate the fouling of their food. Great was the contempt of our Hunza

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

course marry again, taking with her to her new home any unweaned child, but leaving older children with her first husband's parents. If, however, she has grown sons, it is considered not obligatory but more honourable of her "to guard her husband's grave" as they phrase it; the sons will either retain her at home as still the *rúli gus* of the joint house, or they may give her an adjacent home of her own with her still unmarried girls. In either case they will maintain her with all deference and respect.

When a woman marries she by no means loses her identity. She becomes a "wife of the Diramiting" without ceasing to be "a daughter of the Buróng," and when in due course she dies, her own tribal brothers will assist her husband's in performing the last rites. She pays frequent visits to her parents' house, joining when she comes in whatever work is going on; if her family can afford to receive her, she may even go to stay for a lengthy period; it is not unusual for her to take her first baby home and stay for a year after its birth. This does not mean neglect of her husband, for he will still have his mother and sisters-in-law to fend for him. We used to chaff Bibo Gímo's married daughter, whose husband lived in Dorkhan, and ask what he would say to her long absence; but she had, in fact, come to help her mother before and after baby Faqér's birth.

Marriage-related families continually exchange small gifts of fruit or vegetables in season, for at different levels fruit will ripen earlier or later by several weeks; we would see Kaniza, for instance, carrying a small basket of early mulberries to her mother's people or to her married sister in Báltít, who would no doubt send in return some late fruit from Báltít when ours in Aliábád was over. In rush times of harvest, too, relations-in-law are quick to help each other, and a man owes the same courtesies of speech to his wife's parents as to his own.

Except for the physical difficulties of moving about it, Hunza is distinctly a place for the old. No detestable scientific innovations have come to create a gulf between the generations; long after he is unable to help with the heavy work the old man's experience is of value to his great-grandchildren. Levy

MARRIAGE IN HUNZA

561 Hurmat was telling me about his home affairs one day: "Our
888 father and mother are fortunately still with us; they can't *do* very much nowadays, of course; but they are still able to give us orders, thank God." And he meant the "thank God." In the same way the uncanny skill of the old *núli gus* in husbanding the year's supplies is fully appreciated, and her skill with wool and spindle still puts her daughters-in-law to shame.

888 Old Aliko of No. 1A was past all serious work, though he
159 kept up a plucky effort to preserve his youth by the constant dyeing of his fine white beard; but he was a renowned sower and could spread the seed more advantageously on the prepared
243] field than younger men. There is no reckless wastage of precious seed-grain in Hunza; it is never flung where thorns could spring up and choke it, nor by the wayside to be trodden by the feet of men. And the neighbours would call Aliko in to sow for them. A real centenarian is a family treasure. Old Aliko's father was still living at the old homestead in Dorkhan with the other brothers (Aliko had hived off to Aliábád), and we made a special journey by request to see him and take his photograph. He was seated on a roof commanding a magnificent view of a steep hillside on which the farmstead straggled downhill in several storeys, as Hunza houses often do where the ground is steep. He had put on his best silk robe to receive us, and as we climbed the ladder and popped up over the roof brink, he apologized that he could not rise to greet us. Mentally he was as bright as ever and not even slightly deaf, and while David was busy with the portraiture I sat beside him and heard how he had lived through the reigns of four Mirs and four Maharajahs of Kashmir (the Mir, it should not be forgotten, had already reigned forty-five years); how proud he was that his son, Sangi Khan, was one of the headmen of Dorkhan, and how he had three sons and twelve grandsons still living at home (not to mention daughters and their children elsewhere). Before we reached the tale of his great-grandchildren, the photography and our visit were drawing to a close. He counted himself at least a hundred, and was certainly well on in the nineties, but still seemed full of the joy of life.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

MARRIAGE IN HUNZA

889 One day when we were visiting a wine-press, far below the old fort and its graveyards, I made friends with a dear little boy of five who seemed exceptionally active and intelligent, even in a country where all children are peculiarly alive and bright. A beautiful old woman joined us, her handsome face framed by two becoming silver plaits. "Tawálut must be your grandson," I ventured. "'Deed then and he's not," she retorted, "he's my great-grandson. His father was my favourite grandson, and when the poor wife died at this baby's birth, I took and suckled him myself"—a feat with which not many of our great-grandmothers could compete. But of course if you marry at sixteen, you may with luck be a great-grandmother by fifty. Still, it was a good effort, and the boy was an excellent witness to her vitality.

[162] 147 The Burusho population is not large, ten thousand or so at most, and the ramification of well-remembered pedigrees—the humblest can record his genealogy for an astounding number of generations back—brings it about that all families seem ultimately related to one another. It may be this racial purity, judiciously combined with avoidance of close in-breeding, that has produced a stock so markedly fit and healthy. Travelling up through Astor, Gilgit, and Nagir to Hunza, the strong contrast in physical fitness and general intelligence is apparent to the most casual observer; and anyone who knows the races of the Agency will engage a Hunza servant in preference to any other.

585 Marriages normally take place in winter when the people have leisure to give thought to new alliances. The solemn betrothal, presided over by a khalifa, is the effective part of the ceremony. It is usually performed in the bride's house in a semi-private gathering attended only by the members of the families concerned. We were most anxious to be allowed to see one, but by no means hopeful of securing the privilege, to which of course we had not the slightest claim. The servants promised to negotiate matters if possible, and at last Dádo brought us word one day that a girl-relation of Sagi's was about to be betrothed and her people were willing to invite us, but said: "We are poor folk, and our house is humble and we feel

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

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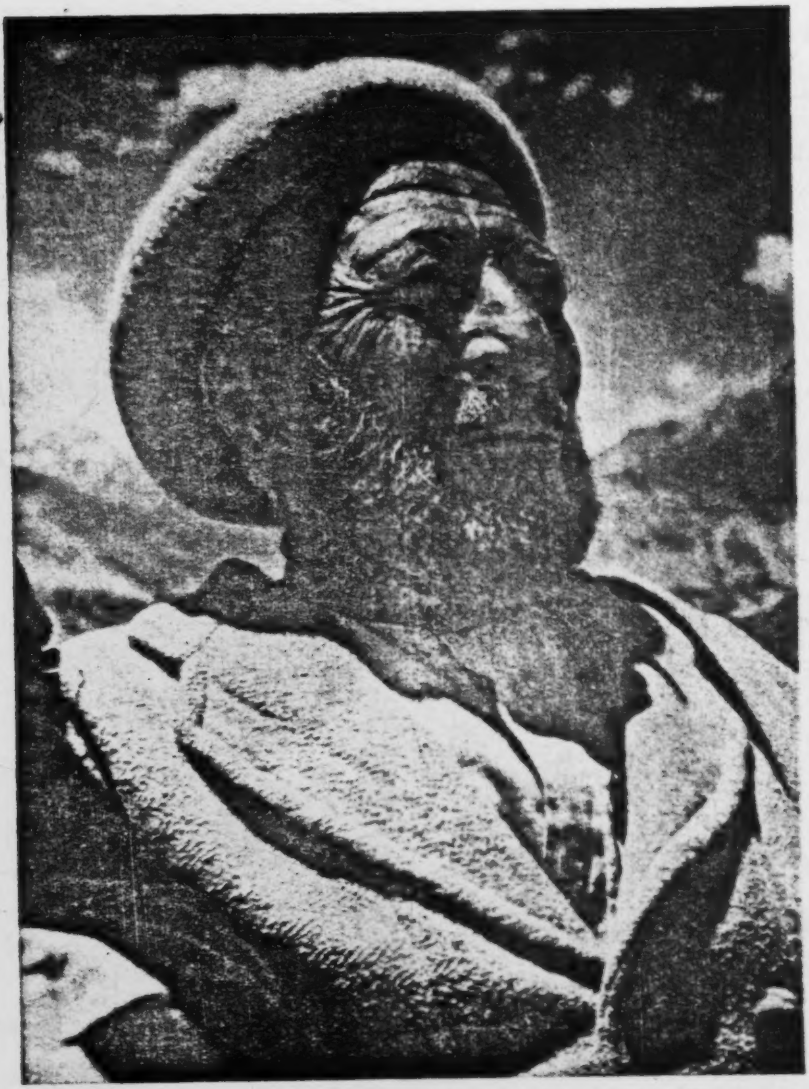

FABLED ELDERS of Hunza are products of rugged mountain life, scarcity, Moslem faith, and an autocratic tradition. If they exaggerate age, it is done to claim society's veneration.